

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Troopers Announce Holiday Safety Enforcement Initiative, *Target Impaired Driving*

MONTGOMERY — Alabama state troopers will welcome the holiday season with special campaigns to combat drunken driving in their work to ensure the safety of motorists in Alabama, according to Col. J. Christopher Murphy, director of the Department of Public Safety. Murphy said troopers will conduct versions of the “Take Back Our Highways” safety campaigns that emphasize sobriety checkpoints and patrols during the seven days before Thanksgiving and again before Christmas.

Law enforcement agencies nationwide traditionally focus on impaired driving enforcement during the holidays, and Alabama’s troopers plan to uphold that life-saving tradition, said Murphy.

“Troopers care about your safety. They will be working to ensure this holiday season is a joyous time unmarred by the tragic consequences of an alcohol-related crash,” said Murphy. He said every available trooper, including many whose normal duties don’t include road patrol, will join with local law enforcement agencies to crack down on drunken driving through stepped-up sobriety patrols and checkpoints.

Troopers will use nine recently acquired BAT-mobiles at DUI checkpoints statewide during the holiday enforcement period. Equipped with breath alcohol testing equipment, the trucks allow for on-scene processing of impaired drivers and also serve as temporary holding facilities. Grant funding for the BAT-mobiles was awarded by Gov. Bob Riley and administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences provided chemical breath-testing equipment for the vehicles.

Murphy said the primary goal of troopers is to prevent crashes and save lives. He stated that trooper-reported traffic fatalities were down by about 100 from the same period last year, and troopers are committed to further reducing fatality totals through the holiday safety campaigns.

“An impaired driver behind the wheel is a crash waiting to happen,” he said. “We are committed to preventing crashes, injuries and fatalities involving alcohol by identifying and removing impaired drivers from the roadway.”

Murphy said troopers also are seeking help from motorists to ensure safety throughout the holiday season. Troopers issued a reminder about the importance of using seat belts, following all the traffic laws, and driving with care and caution.

“Distractions abound during the holiday season, so please remember to focus first and foremost on the driving task,” said Murphy. “Your safety and that of your passengers and fellow motorists depend on it.”

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